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AUTHOR Garcia, Jesus; And Others
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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on a study in which five eighth-grade United States history textbooks were analyzed with regard to their treatment of white and nonwhite ethnic groups. Three instruments were employed: a series of questions derived from an article by Robert Blauner on factors necessary to a realistic understanding of ethnic minorities; the National Education Association "Checklist for Selecting and Evaluating U.S. History Textbooks"; and a slightly altered version of David Pratt's Evaluation Coefficient Analysis. The paper discusses procedures of the study and reports on the percentage of data in each textbook that addresses the key questions derived from Blauner's article. Analysis of the data revealed that, since 1956, proportions of ethnic content in textbooks have increased but, although authors addressed some of the questions suggested by Blauner, in many instances coverage has been minimal. (GW)

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IMAGES OF NAMED AND NON-WHITE ETHNIC GROUPS AS PRESENTED IN SELECTED EIGHTH GRADE U.S. HISTORY TEXTBOOKS

Paper presented at the XVI
Interamerican Congress of Psychology
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Jesus Garcia
Walter Stenning
Peggy Cooper-Stenning

College of Education
Department of Educational Curriculum
and Instruction
Texas A&M University
College Station, Texas 77843

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IMAGES OF NAMED WHITE AND NON-WHITE ETHNIC GROUPS AS PRESENTED IN SELECTED EIGHTH GRADE U.S. HISTORY TEXTBOOKS[1]

Jesus Garcia[2] Walter F. Stenning Peggy Cooper-Stenning

Texas A&M University
College Station, Texas, USA

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to analyze the treatment of White and non-White ethnic groups in selected eighth grade U.S. history textbooks. Content analysis was used to evaluate the textbooks. The instruments employed were a series of questions derived from the Blauner article "Colonized and Immigrant Minorities," a version of NEA's Checklist for Selecting and Evaluating Textbooks and Pratt's Evaluation Coefficient Analysis. A total of 12880 statements were extracted and scored.

Analysis of these data revealed that since 1956 proportions of ethnic content in textbooks had increased. Authors addressed some of the questions suggested by Blauner but in many instances coverage was minimal. Another finding was that when writers described contact between individual ethnic groups and the White American majority, the ethnic groups usually were associated with more negative than positive terms. Finally, it was noted that textbook writers attempted to address issues which provided information crucial in understanding the roles of White and non-White groups in terms of questions suggested by the Blauner model, but in most instances fell far short of their goal.

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[2]Requests for additional copies should be sent to Jesus Garcia, Texas A&M University, Department of Educational Curriculum and Instruction, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas, USA 77843.

INTRODUCTION

Public education reflects how one social institution depicts racial minorities.* Historically, that portrayal has not varied significantly. Whether viewed as melting into U.S. society or retaining ethnic identities, minorities have been associated with problems. Periodically, articles appear in education journals describing these groups. Moreover, since the 1960's, educators have taken varying positions on how best to provide for these groups (Webster, 1966; Carter, 1970; Ramirez and Castaneda, 1973).

Criticisms of public education's treatment of racial minorities have centered on three fronts: (1) the lack of non-White teachers, administrators and other personnel in decision roles; (2) a curriculum devoid of meaningful ethnic content; (3) an adherence to a philosophy that minimizes ethnic differences while emphasizing values associated with Anglos (Banks, 1975).

Attitudes of public education toward racial minorities have been reflected in commercially prepared learning materials. Textbooks, in particular, have mirrored the attitudes of the dominant Anglo ethnic community. This paper examines the curriculum of California eighth graders by gauging the treatment of White and non-White ethnic groups in U.S. history textbooks.

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*In this study the terms "minorities," "non-Whites," "non-European," and "racial minorities" were used interchangeably. Also, White Americans and established Americans were used interchangeably. The phrase ethnic groups was used when referring to White and non-White groups.

Statement of the Problem

If the assumption is made that ethnic content in U.S. history textbooks has increased, the next s are to identify where gains have appeared and to measure whether the overall treatment of ethnic groups has improved (Banks, 1969). Such a task raises crucial questions which textbook writers and social studies educators need to address: What is played down? Do particular groups receive more coverage than others? Do writers lump groups together generalizing from the experiences of one group to others? Do writers describe interaction between established U.S. citizens and the ethnic group? Obviously, these questions presume a particular interpretation of U.S. history.

One interpretation of the history of non-White groups is provided by the sociologist Robert Blauner (1972a) in his essay "Colonized and Immigrant Minorities." Blauner suggests that the history of ethnic minorities differs significantly from that of European groups. He argues that an understanding of ethnic minorities must be prefaced by studying their role in U.S. history. But, such study cannot focus with profit on ethnic minorities alone. Blauner notes that the history of ethnic minorities is, in many respects, the history of the actions of White U.S. citizens. For example, one of the reasons Chicanos traditionally are found in marginal sectors of the economy is because of the actions of some White U.S. citizens. Thus, to understand the role ethnic minorities have played in U.S. history one must research the events that bring minority and majority groups together, note the interplay that occurs, and observe the results of such contacts.

When an accurate description of the ethnic groups in U.S. history is written, that description surely will include key periods of White/non-White interaction.

Purpose of the Study

This study analyzed the treatment of White and non-White groups in textbooks. Treatment of ethnic groups in five selected California eighth grade textbooks was assessed utilizing a systematic approach. Instruments used included the National Education Association "Checklist for Selecting and Evaluating U.S. History Textbooks" (1975) (herein referred to as Revised NEA Checklist) and a slightly altered version of Pratt's Evaluation Coefficient Analysis (1972) (herein referred to as ECO Analysis).

This study was longitudinal in nature (1956-1976) so as to identify changes in the image(s) of particular ethnic groups.

The study examined the images of three non-White ethnic groups: Black, Chicanos, Native Americans; the images of individuals of four countries that explored the New World: Spanish, Dutch, French, English; four European ethnic groups commonly subsumed under the category White Americans: Irish, German, Italian and Jewish Americans; and the category White Americans. (The term White Americans was not identified as an ethnic group, but as a category since it is commonly used by textbook writers as a catch-all label for European immigrant groups.)

The category White Americans was used as a reference in investigating the specific periods of U.S. history between the category White Americans and ethnic groups. For each of the three major groups and the category White Americans a list was compiled of specific periods in U.S. history

which reflected major involvement between the category White Americans and the three non-White groups.

The selection of material was thematic. The topics are examples of what can be called decisive interactions. They may identify an agency which significantly affected the groups, a theme or a specific event in U.S. history (e.g., Blacks - slavery; White Americans - westward expansion; Native Americans - Bureau of Indian Affairs.)

In the primary analysis of the texts, the purpose was two-fold. First, the textual and non-textual material used by a given writer was evaluated to describe a particular non-White group interacting with the category White Americans. Second, the textual and non-textual material used by a given writer was assessed to describe the category White Americans interacting with non-White groups.

Information was identified and coded onto the Revised NEA Checklist using ECO Analysis. ECO Analysis measures all evaluative terms - nouns, verbs, adverbs - and provides a simple formula which measures a writer's affective description of a particular group. Once coded, the data were employed to address a series of questions derived from the Blauner essay, "Colonized and Immigrant Minorities." How and to what extent did textbook writers:

A. describe why each group immigrated to the U.S.?

B. describe when each ethnic group immigrated to the U.S. and where initial contacts with U.S. citizens (White/non-White) began?

C. describe major interactions between White Americans and ethnic groups?

D. accurately present each ethnic group (not stereotypes)?

E. reinforce initial American White/non-White perception of each ethnic group?

F. give historical perspective to the problems and accomplishments associated with each ethnic group?

G. draw a distinction between the experiences of White/non-White groups in the U.S.?

In a secondary analysis a sub-topical list of specific terms which refer to the eleven groups under study were used to evaluate the treatment of ethnic groups in instances not necessarily associated with key junctures of interaction (e.g., Irish Americans, Black (Negroes), German Americans, Chicanos (Mexican Americans).

Review of Content Analysis and Treatment of Ethnic Groups in Public School Textbooks

Content analysis is not a single technique but "any technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics within a text" (Holsti, 1969, p. 10). A method frequently used in textbook evaluation is a combination of two of the more common techniques used in content analysis: thematic analysis and assertion analysis (Banks, 1969; Pratt, 1971; Mortensen, 1973).

According to Schmidt (1974, p. 16), thematic analysis "entails a process of gathering a series of significant events, themes, or incidents from a certain time period and matching these with what is included in a text". In this technique, information surrounding selected events is coded (i.e., positive, neutral, negative) and then compared with other findings. Assertion analysis "consists of extracting all evaluative assertions, or statements containing value judgements, from texts,

assigning numerial values to each word in the assertion, and then computing a mean value from the given subjects."

Marcus (1961) examined forty-eight secondary social studies textbooks commonly used in the 1950's for their treatment of intergroup relations. He identified intergroup relations in textbooks as the treatment given to Jews, minorities under Nazism, Blacks, and other minorities. Marcus developed and used seven broad categories (inclusion, validity, balance, comprehensiveness, concreteness, unity, and realism) as guidelines to evaluate the textbooks. The conclusions suggested that gains had occurred since 1949 but that many of the gains were uneven.

Banks (1969) reviewed thirty-six elementary history textbooks used in grades four through eight in terms of treatment of Blacks and race relations. He used a thematic analysis to tabulate for frequency of eleven categories (e.g., discrimination, racial violence, racial harmony, achievement, etc.). A sub-sample of six textbooks was used to compare frequency of themes in 1964 and 1968 textbooks. Some of the findings revealed that many authors rarely depict violence and in some instances fail to explain certain categories (prejudice, deliberate segregation). However, Banks also found that textbook writers relied less and less on stereotypes and that the treatment of Blacks had significantly improved since 1964.

Pratt (1969), in an effort to obtain data which were a quantitative assessment of minority groups in textbooks and thus subject to statistical interpretation, developed the Evaluation Assertion Rating System (EARS).

He evaluated sixty-nine history textbooks used in Ontario public schools. His analysis led to the collection of 4904 evaluative assertions. Pratt's findings revealed that textbooks presented a favorable stereotype of French Canadians and unfavorable stereotypes of Blacks and Indians. Pratt also found (EARS) to be a useful instrument in measuring evaluative assertions about minority groups in other written materials. Pratt (1972) further refined (EARS) and developed the Evaluation Coefficient Analysis.

Sims (1975) reported that the Dallas Chapter of the American Jewish Committee, a fifteen member taskforce, examined history textbooks on Texas' 1975 official state adoption list for treatment of Blacks, Chicanos and Native Americans. Using omission and commission as guidelines, the group developed four guidelines - stereotyping, ethnocentrism, Eurocentrism, and use of prejudicial statements or caricatures that demean minorities - to sort and measure the statements made of the three groups. The conclusions of the taskforce's year long study were that textbooks continue to be less than objective in treating these three minority groups.

Procedures

Listed below are the textbooks selected for study and the capital letters identifying each textbook.

R = Hartman, Gertrude. America: Land of Freedom. Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1956.

S = Casner, Mabel B., et. al., Story of the American Nation. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1967.

U = Caughey, John W., Franklin, John Hope, and May Ernest. Land of the Free, a History of the United States. Pasedena, California: Franklin Publications, 1967.

Y = Chapin, June R., et. al., Quest for Liberty - Investigating United States History. Menlo Park, California: Addison Wesley, 1973.

W = Okun, Mitchel and Bronz, Stephen H., The Challenge of America. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1975.

Utilization of Revised NEA Checklist

Utilizing the "Revised NEA Checklist" the procedures listed below were applied in tabulating the category White Americans and the different ethnic groups.

1. For each topic all sentences and phrases describing the topic associated with each ethnic group were tabulated with symbols which identified the source of the statement (textbook), the page number, the chronological number of the statement under each topic and where applicable, the sex of the subject of the statement.

    a. the subject of the tabulation was circled and the statement numbered.

2. An illustration, drawing, cartoon, map, and its accompanying text were tabulated and carried the letters (DR) in parentheses.

3. The following statements were tabulated and further recognized with and asterisk fixed above the number identifying the statement's chronological placement:

    a. an insert which highlighted and/or reinforced a particular topic.

    b. where applicable, questions at the end of each paragraph.

    c. where applicable, exercises at the conclusion of chapters and units.

d. statements adopted from other sources, statements of individuals and of groups of people.

e. an inquiry question which introduced a chapter or paragraph.

4. Sentences and phrases with double meaning were tabulated and further recognized with two asterisks. No other special consideration was given to information identified as having double meaning.

5. Once a topic was tabulated the following procedures were used to enter the statement onto the checklists.

a. separate checklists were provided for the topics identified with the three non-White groups, the category "White Americans" and the subjects under the sub-topic list.

6. Descriptive and evaluative statements were placed on the checklists; however, only evaluative statements were scored (positive, neutral, negative) and the initial evaluative term in a statement dictated its placement onto the checklists. Descriptive statements were considered neutral.

7. The "ECO Word List, Synonym and Related Words" instrument was used in deciding placement of statements onto the checklists.

8. The summary of statements on the checklists indicated:

a. the quality and type of information used in describing each group.

b. the amount of evaluative versus descriptive information used in describing each group.

c. the image(s) of each group.

Results

The following table represents the percent of data in each textbook which address the Blauner questions. If five percent expresses acceptable treatment, the data suggest that questions 'B', 'C', 'D', 'E', and 'F' are adequately treated.

Data Addressing Blauner Questions

A. How and to what extent did textbook writers describe why each group immigrated to the U.S.?

B. How and to what extent did textbook writers describe when each ethnic group immigrated to the U.S. & where initial contacts with U.S. citizens (White/non-White) began?

C. How and to what extent did textbook writers describe major interactions between White Americans and ethnic groups?

D. How and to what extent did textbook writers accurately present each ethnic group (not stereotypes)?

E. How and to what extent did textbook writers reinforce initial American White/non-White perception of each ethnic group?

F. How and to what extent did textbook writers give historical perspective to the problems and accomplishments associated with each ethnic group?

G. How and to what extent did textbook writers draw a distinction between the experiences of White/non-White groups in the U.S.?

Textbook	A.	B.	C.	D.	E.	F.	G.
Amer.: Land of Freedom	2%	5%	15%	97%	13%	16%	0%
Story Amer. Nation	2%	5%	15%	93%	13%	11%	0%
Land of the Free	2%	6%	16%	91%	14%	8%	0%
Quest for Liberty	1%	5%	15%	90%	15%	8%	1%
Challenge of America	2%	6%	20%	90%	20%	12%	0%

Since 1956, ethnic content in eighth grade California adopted U.S. history textbooks increased with each adoption period. One thousand four hundred and sixty-three statements were treated in America: Land of Freedom (1956) while three thousand two hundred and forty-seven statements were scored in The Challenge of America (1976). The quality of a significant portion of these data was expressed in the general Blauner question, "How and to what extent do textbook writers accurately present each ethnic group?" (question D). Except for some omissions in America: Land of Freedom (1956) all groups in the texts were described in favorable or balanced terms.

The analysis of the 12,880 statements suggested that a bulk of the information did not address the key questions Blauner believes are fundamental in realistically describing non-White groups and, in this study, other groups which immigrated to the U.S. In reference to why groups immigrated to the U.S. (question A) data in some instances barely exceeded the minimum five statements. Coverage was selective; White Americans, Native Americans, Blacks, and English were treated in four of the five textbooks. Treatment of all groups was usually favorable or neutral. The description of when groups immigrated to the U.S. (question B) was associated with question A. Except for The Challenge of America (1976) which described Blacks with more negative than positive terms, the description of groups was usually neutral, balanced, and in some occasions, positive.

In describing major interactions between White Americans and ethnic groups (question C), treatment followed no observable trends. In

America: Land of Freedom (1956) and Story of the American Nation (1976), Native Americans were associated with more negative than positive or neutral terms. Blacks were described with more negative than positive or neutral terms in America: Land of Freedom (1956) but received a positive, neutral or balanced treatment in remaining texts. In most instances, European explorer groups received more positive and neutral descriptions than did southern and eastern European groups.

To what extent do writers reinforce initial American perception of each group (question E) - descriptions found in America: Land of Freedom (1956). Land of the Free (1967), and Quest for Liberty (1973) were neutral or balanced. Exceptions were apparent. Chicanos and Indians were described with more negative than positive terms in Story of the American Nation (1967) while Blacks were described positively in The Challenge of America (1976).

To what extent do writers give historical perspective to problems and accomplishments of groups, (question F) treatment increased with each adoption period and in most instances was positive or neutral. Except for Quest for Liberty (1973), which provided minimal treatment, the other textbooks did not address the experiences of ethnic groups as unique (question G). In all texts there was a tendency to generalize from one group to another.

Since ECO Analysis was used in conjunction with the Revised NEA Checklist, the coefficients for groups in a given interaction and for a text were reflected in the groups' description onto the Revised NEA Checklist. The coefficients ranged from 0.0 totally unfavorable to

100.0 totally favorable. The group receiving the highest overall coefficient was White Americans (74.2). The trend, however, was to present a balanced review of the groups.

Implications

This study revealed that writers viewed U.S. society as culturally pluralistic and in some instances viewed history vis'a vis the Blauner model. These trends suggest that evaluators must pay particular attention to the kind of description ethnic groups, especially non-White groups, will be receiving. As writers describe ethnic groups interacting with White Americans, what will be the images of the groups? This study provided evidence which suggests that writers tend to associate ethnic groups (and, in some instances, White Americans) with more negative than positive terms. For example, Blacks in the 1960's frequently were associated with such terms as "fighting," "riots," "turmoil," violence" and much less often with terms like "rights," "non-violence," and "freedom." The image of the group in these instances was negative. If writers adopt more of the Blauner model in their treatment of individual ethnic groups, will this necessitate the use of more negative terms in particular situations and overall a less balanced treatment of these groups?

A second implication is that non-White groups usually were subordinate characters in writers' descriptions of U.S. history. Blacks, for example, were "acted upon" in the topics "reconstruction" and "slavery"; Chicanos were "melted into" the group "immigrants"; and

Native Americans were described as Indians. In instances where minorities were main characters, they were in conflict with established U.S. citizens and were described negatively. It seems that as textbook writers attempt to include more ethnic content, they need to describe minorities as main characters actively participating in history. Minorities, like other groups, need to be portrayed in a variety of roles.

This study reviewed U.S. history textbooks and limited its analysis to White/non-White interaction. However, the issue of ethnic groups/ minority groups is much broader in scope. In some American countries, ethnic groups are reassessing their historical and contemporary roles. Included in this reassessment is an analysis of their depiction by federal and private agencies.

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